THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India has reported that a portion of first floor of the Madras Terrace Building, housing the Tamil Nadu Mercantile Bank Ltd. at Tuticorin, had collapsed on 22-3-1986 causing injuries to 4 employees of the Bank. One injured employee later on succumbed to the injuries on way to the hospital.

(c) Officers of the Bank had inquired into the matter and found it to be a case of pure accident.

(d) According to the Reserve Bank of India, arrangements are being made by the Tamil Nadu Mercantile Bank Ltd. to pay compensation to the next of kin of the deceased employee in accordance with the proceedings initiated by the Additional Commissioner for Workmen Compensation, Tirunelveli. The Bank has also reportedly borne the entire medical expenses of the injured employees.

News-item captioned "Clandestine import of coconut oil"

1115. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Clandestine import of coconut oil" which appeared in the Indian Express of the 22nd March, 1986; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER) (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Export of pepper to the United States

1116. SHRI M. S. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 900 tonnes of pepper exported to the United States in recent months was contaminated by some poisonous chemical during transit;

(b) if so, what are the names of the shippers and the exporters; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to fix the responsibility?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) to (c) According to information available with Government about 900 tonnes of pepper exported to the United States has been detained by the US authorities on the suspicion that it had been fumigated with the chemical Ethylene Dibromide (EDB). The use of EDB in edible articles is not permitted in the United States. It has not been conclusively established the alleged contamination took place during transt. Government have since banned the use of any fumigant containing EDB in Export consignments of pepper or in ships carrying such consignments.

Amendment of payment of Gratuity Act, 1972

1117. SHRI M. S. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Miniter of LABOUR be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question No. 969 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 4th March, 1986 and state whether Government have since taken any final decision for amending the payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 and if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): No, Sir. The proposal for amendment are yet to be finalised.

Import of oil for vanaspati

1118. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that to maintain uniformity in delivery cost throughout the country the STC is reimbursing frei-

ght, octroi, insurance and sales tax on the imported oil for production of vanaspati as per the recommendation of the Parmeshwaram Committee;

(b) whether it is also a fact that only in Gujarat purchase tax is collected by the concerned authorities in lieu of or as a substitute of sales tax from vanaspati industries of Gujarat;

(c) whether it is also a fact that when Parmeshwaram Committee made its recommendations, sales tax was operating in Gujarat and thereafter it was substituted by purchase tax; and

(d) whether the vanaspati industry has made any representation in this regard to the STC; if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) State Trading Corporation is reimbursing freight, octroi and sales tax on supply of imported oil to vanaspati industry as per the recommendation of the Parmeshwaram Committee Report.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association has made a representation to State Trading Corporation and the matter is engaging the attention of the Government.

Abolition oil contract labour system in FCI

1119. SHRI K. MOHANAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have agreed in principle to abolish the contract labour system in the Food Corporation of India; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The matter relating to the employment of contract labour in Food Corporation of India was discussed in the meeting of the Central Advisory Contract Labour Board held on the 13th March, 1986. The Board decided to constitute a Committee to go into the issue of abolition of contract labour system in Food Corporation of India. A Committee is being constituted accordingly.

1120. [*Transferred to the 8th May, 1986*].

Foreign exchange racket

1121. SHRI T. CHANDRASEKHAR REDDY:
SHRI RAMANAND YADAV:
SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA:
SHRI SURAJ PRASAD:
SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Bureau of Investigation has unearthed a well organised racket involving sending of millions of dollars of foreign exchange to Pakistan as reported in the Hindustan Times of the 11th April, 1986;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what is the amount involved therein; and

(d) what remedial steps the Central Government are taking in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) to (d) On a complaint from the Enforcement Directorate (FERA) that huge amounts of foreign exchange in the form of Travellers cheques are being issued on Foreign Travel Schemes (F.T. Schemes) to a Delhi based Travel Agent Shri Parvez Alam Dost proprietor of M/s. Dost Travel by the officials of the United Bank of India, New Delhi on the basis of forged documents, the CBI has registered cases u/s. 120-B I.P.C. r/w 420, 467, 468 and 471